

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BULLETIN 28



RECRUITING - III. ADVERTISING

Ontario Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Thomas L. Wells
Minister

D. W. Stevenson
Deputy Minister

Municipal Administration Branch
Local Government Division


July 1979

To the Municipal Clerk:

Please circulate this bulletin or make copies for distribution to councillors or staff of your municipality who may be interested in the subject. Additional copies are available at fifty cents each from the Publications Centre (see page 18).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
WHERE TO LOOK	2
Present Staff	2
Going Outside	3
WHERE TO PLACE THE AD	4
WRITING THE AD	5
Be Unique	5
Provide Information	6
Be Honest and Believable	6
Be Interesting	7
Be Readable	7
Consider the Reader's Viewpoint	8
CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM	8
SUMMARY	15
APPENDIX - "GUIDELINES RESPECTING JOB ADVERTISING"	16



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761118943695>

INTRODUCTION

This is the third bulletin on the subject of recruiting municipal staff. The first bulletin highlighted the planning of the recruiting process itself -- the steps in it, who should be involved, where to look for help. The second presented some ideas for analyzing the job and coming up with a profile of the person who would best fill it. The main subject of this one is writing and placing an advertisement.

A quick review of the advertisement of municipal positions over the past year or so shows a need for stressing the importance of the quality of advertising. Simply, the quality of the ad affects the number and quality of the applicants it attracts.

"Good" ads for municipal positions are rare -- and understandably. Vacancies, especially at senior levels, do not occur frequently in the majority of municipalities. Writing ads for those jobs is difficult when you have little experience. There is, as well, very little written on the subject of effective recruitment advertising.

This bulletin and the suggestions contained in it are offered to municipal staff as a reference when writing advertisements for municipal vacancies.

WHERE TO LOOK

If you have firmly established what the job is (the functions it is to perform, its role within the organization, the proper salary range) and the person you need to fill it (the skills, experience, education, and personality), the probable sources of qualified people should be fairly evident. The two basic areas you have to consider are "inside" and "outside".

Present Staff

If there are people already on staff who have the background and skill to do the job, it would be a waste of time and money to conduct a recruiting campaign outside of the municipality. You may even have decided that experience in your municipality would be a decided asset for the job, a "nice-to-have". For example, lead hands or foremen or group leaders are often chosen from present staff because it helps, in those jobs, to be very familiar with the work procedures as well as the people working in the unit and their capacities.

The job to be filled may be a logical, perhaps even planned, career move for someone on staff -- so much so that if that person were not promoted, the rest of the staff would think it strange, even to the point of undermining respect for management. If your organization has "deputy" positions, this situation is probably not unfamiliar.

A third situation that calls for promotion of present staff is where the job to be filled is part of the bargaining unit and a collective agreement is in effect that demands that you promote on the basis of seniority.

Basically, then, you should fill the job by promoting present staff when

- staff have all of the required qualifications (the "must-have's") as well as the advantageous ("nice-to-have") experience with the municipality, so much so that it is doubtful that any applicants from outside would look any better; or

- the job to be filled is a logical or planned career move; that is, someone on staff has been encouraged and trained to assume this job and has proven capable of assuming it; or
- the job to be filled is part of the bargaining unit and must be filled on the basis of seniority.

Going Outside

Deciding whether to fill a job from inside, like most other management decisions, is not so simple, however -- there is another side to the coin. For one thing, promoting someone on staff limits your choice. You may think highly of someone on staff and you may be certain that a promotion is in order, but somehow you don't feel positive when that person hasn't been challenged, compared to, competed against by others from outside. It may be said, too, that staff tend to lose their "sharpness" when promotion from within is the rule; they can become complacent when there is no competition. You may also have to face up to the municipality's short-comings in training staff. You may have to admit that none of the staff is ready to be promoted to foreman or group leader. The Deputy may be a good schedule-and-operations man, but may be lacking the solid management and communications skills needed to be Chief.

Generally, a policy or a practice of always advertising vacancies outside at the same time as inside will assure a bigger and better selection of qualified people to choose from. So, you should advertise outside as well as inside when

- you are not very certain that present staff have the necessary skills and abilities; and
- the morale of present staff will not suffer; that is, it will not look as if someone has been passed over for a promotion that seemed a "sure thing"; and
- the municipality can afford the time and cost of a recruiting campaign.

WHERE TO PLACE THE AD

If your search extends beyond the present staff of the municipality to the community or the rest of the Province or even the rest of the country, it will involve placing an ad in one or other type of newspaper, journal, or periodical.

You need use only local newspapers if you think the community can supply what you are looking for. This would be the case where the job does not require municipal experience, in your municipality or any other. The things you would be looking for, instead of municipal experience, would be manual or equipment-operating skills (e.g. snow-plough operator) or office skills (e.g. secretary) or technical ability (e.g. accounting) that can be acquired from people working in local businesses, industries, or institutions. (Placing all municipal ads in the local newspapers is a common practice because it let's the community know what's going on.)

National newspapers such as The Globe and Mail and The Financial Post are appropriate if the job represents a career opportunity in management, and where the supply of qualified people is probably low. The circulation of these newspapers would allow you to appeal to a variety of people with broad, management experience.

Trade or association journals and newsletters such as The Municipal Monitor and Municipal World should be used to appeal to those already in the municipal market or those interested enough in municipal work to subscribe to these publications.

WRITING THE AD

The purpose of advertising is to attract as many qualified people as you can -- not just large numbers of people, but qualified people. The ad has to "sell" the job. For your ad to appeal to the most discriminating and selective of qualified people, for it to convince them to take that important step of applying for a job, then it must

- be unique,
- provide information,
- be honest and believable,
- be interesting,
- be readable, and
- consider the reader's viewpoint.

Some thoughts follow below on how to achieve each of these.

Be Unique

If the name of your municipality can be removed and switched with another without changing the meaning of the ad, then your ad is failing to communicate. Everyone is not sitting out there just waiting for the chance to work for your municipality -- the ad has to say what is interesting and challenging about the job.

"This position is expected to provide expert advice on financial management and investment."

"The work will involve the establishing of new systems and procedures for..."

"You will be a member of the Municipality's senior-management team and..."

"If you are seeking an opportunity to apply your records-management skills..."

Provide Information

A job title doesn't necessarily explain the job. The ad should provide as much relevant information as possible about the job.

How many people does it supervise?

Who does it report to?

What are its main responsibilities?

What salary range and benefits are being offered?

Be Honest and Believable

Glittering generalities, grandiose claims, and the promise of Utopia are suspect, to say the least. Credibility will be achieved if you provide enough information on the challenges in the job.

"You will be expected to meet deadlines and objectives in this newly-established department."

"Responsibilities will include the development of policies for this function and recommending their adoption by council."

"The profile of this position in the community demands excellent communication ability."

Be Interesting

While ads cannot be glittering and fascinating, they need not be deadly boring either. Try to avoid masses of unimportant detail and the jargon that is better placed in a job description or appointment by-law.

"Will maintain accurate records of the Corporation's financial operations and will implement and monitor procedures and systems in order to provide senior management with current and up-to-date..."

... is boring.

"Applications will be received by the undersigned until Friday, September 30,"

...reads like an invitation to tender.

What is interesting to someone reading an ad? Factual information, important detail, and the main areas of challenge in the job.

Be Readable

The ad's appearance will make people read it or reject it.

A four-line title like

THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF BLANK
requires a
CLERK-TREASURER

is cluttered and dull. People reading ads are more interested in the job than in the municipality.

Using too many different kinds of type looks cluttered, too. And lines that are all capital letters are hard to read.

Keep it simple -- use enough space to convey your message, but no more.

Keep it brief. Eliminate the extraneous.

Consider the Reader's Viewpoint

If you were the reader, what would you want to know about this job? "What's in it for me?" has to be answered.

Keep in mind what your intended audience knows and doesn't know about either the job or the municipality. To someone outside of municipal government, "the Social Services and Welfare Committee of Council" would mean very little and sound bureaucratic -- "a committee of Council" would do nicely and would take up less space.

If your ad is to appear in the career pages of a large newspaper, the functional area (Treasurer, Chief Administrator, Senior Management) should be the eye-catcher and in larger type than "The Corporation of the Town of...." Again, it would also save space and money and would achieve more with the particular audience.

The size, location and character of the municipality (industrial or rapidly growing or recreation community) may even have to be stated if your intended audience is in another province or another part of Ontario.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

On the next few pages are samples of ads taken from copies of The Municipal World.

They are criticized here in the hope that you will find the criticism helpful.

**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF [REDACTED]**

requires a

**BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT
OFFICER — ZONING
ADMINISTRATOR**

Why
"possibly"?

Does the
municipality
not know
what it
needs?

The successful applicant will be required to carry out the duties of the by-law enforcement officer and zoning administrator. The successful applicant will also be required to carry out the duties of the planning board secretary-treasurer, and the committee of adjustment secretary and possibly the duties of the secretary-treasurer of the recreation committee.

Apply in writing and supply a complete resume of experience, educational background, references, age and marital status.

Salary commensurate with qualifications. Applications will be received until 12 noon [REDACTED] 1978 and should be directed to:

Repeats what is already above, so it takes up unnecessary and costly space without saying anything.

Why age and marital status? That information cannot be used to judge qualifications.

It would be difficult to know if you should bother applying for this job: there is no indication of salary; the duties are somewhat vague; and, most important, there are no qualifications indicated.

What is wanted here?

As to what information you can or cannot ask for under the Ontario Human Rights Code, a guideline regarding that legislation is attached as an appendix to this bulletin.

**THE CORPORATION OF
THE CITY OF [REDACTED]
requires a
PLANNER**

Applications will be received by the undersigned up to Friday, [REDACTED] 1977.

Applicants require a degree in urban planning or related discipline and a minimum of three years experience in a responsible planning position. Salary negotiable.

— — stilted wording,
and
placed where
it will turn
the reader
off.

There is no message about the job here.

What are the duties?

Who does it report to?

What is the salary?

It may as well say,

"We have a job. Do you want one?"

**THE CORPORATION OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF [REDACTED]
requires a
CLERK-TREASURER**

The Corporation of the Township of [REDACTED] invites applications for the position of Clerk-Treasurer.

unnecessary
repetition

Preference will be given to applicants who are enrolled in or have completed the A.M.C.T.O. course and who have experience.

Experience in what?
How much experience?

Applications should be submitted on or before [REDACTED] and should contain an outline of experience, personal data, qualifications and references. Successful applicant will be expected to work for about six months on a probationary basis with the present Clerk-Treasurer who will be retiring at that time.

This is an interesting
and important detail.
(The word
"probationary"
raises a lot of
questions, though.)

Things that remain unanswered are:

- Who does the job report to?
- What qualities and qualifications are being sought?
- What is the salary range?
- What type, size municipality is this?

THE TOWNSHIP OF [REDACTED]
requires a
MUNICIPAL ENGINEER

A qualified Civil Engineer is required to be responsible for the top level administration of the Road & Bridge and the Water & Sewage Departments, now operated on a day to day basis by Senior Foreman and their Structured Staffs.

The Engineer will work in harmony with appropriate Council Committees in establishing Relevant Municipal Budgets, Long Range Project Planning and Direction to Senior Foremen on carrying out Listed Projects on Established Priority Basis, Analysis Studies on Equipment, Manpower & Performance.

The Engineer will be responsible for the Design & Layout of Plans and Specifications for certain Roadway Constructions, as well as, certain Municipal Sewer and Watermain Installations, including on site Supervision.

Qualifications: —

The successful Applicant must have a Degree in Civil Engineering. Eligibility for membership in A.P.E.O. is required.

A minimum of Five Years related Municipal Experience is desirable. Enthusiasm, Public Relation Concern, and Ability to Communicate Effectively are essential.

Salary: —

Commensurate with Qualifications and Experience.

Excellent Fringe Benefit Package.

Applications will be received to 5:00 P.M. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Apply in Writing, providing a Complete Resume and Date available to: —

This ad presents the job details well. It might have been much more readable, however, if so many capital letters had not been used.

CITY OF [REDACTED]
requires
CITY CLERK

As a result of the pending retirement of the incumbent the City of [REDACTED] (population [REDACTED] in the Regional Municipality of [REDACTED]) requires the services of a City Clerk.

The work involves all phases of the clerk's statutory responsibilities including preparation of agendas and minutes of council meetings, preparing and updating information, preparing voters' lists and the conduct of municipal elections and duties relating to The Assessment Act.

The successful applicant will be a secondary school graduate and a graduate of the training course for municipal clerks and treasurers at Queen's University (AMCT). Preference will be given to applicants having a minimum of five years experience in the role of deputy clerk or clerk. All applicants must be fluently bilingual (French & English).

Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Apply in writing and supply a complete resume of experience, educational background and references. All applications will be kept confidential. Applications will be received until November [REDACTED] and should be directed to:

This ad presents a proper amount and type of information -- the size of the municipality, the fact that it is lower-tier, the main functions of the job. The qualifications are specific. The tone is businesslike and direct without being bureaucratic. It would be interesting to know, though, why the salary range was not included.

CITY MANAGER

HALIFAX

- Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, is Atlantic Canada's largest city. It continues to achieve impressive residential and commercial growth. Strong administrative leadership and direction are required to meet the challenges that lie ahead. We are coordinating a coast-to-coast search to locate a Chief Administrative Officer for the City.
- The new City Manager will be an innovative and highly energetic person with several years of successful senior experience in municipal administration. He or she will have clearly demonstrated the executive skills needed for the effective management of the municipality's complex \$100 million operation.
- Ideally with a background that includes a university degree, the successful candidate will be especially adept in budget operations and planning, have a commitment to citizen responsive government, a total dedication to public service, and the proven ability to coordinate and motivate a diversity of staff departments with diplomacy and effectiveness.
- Civic administrative officials who measure up to the above criteria are asked to reply in complete confidence by forwarding detailed personal resumes to [REDACTED]

Please refer to file no. 1205

Member of the Canadian Association of Management Consultants



This ad catches the eye immediately. The bold "frame", the nicely balanced use of space, the uncluttered heading that stresses "City Manager". rather than the City.

Even though the salary is not mentioned, the wording eliminates all but senior municipal executives.

The qualities of communications skills, dedication, leadership and particular skills and strengths all form a distinct profile of the person who is wanted.

SUMMARY

Perhaps the most important, and most difficult, thing to achieve when writing an ad is balance. An ad should appeal, without overselling. It should also screen out people you do not want to apply.

For example, if your ad says the job is "challenging" and will appeal to "bright, enthusiastic" people who "seek opportunities to advance", then be prepared to attract that type of person and live up to your promises.

That type of wording will probably scare off the practical type of person who may be capable and community-service oriented but is not a "high-flyer".

If the job, and the ad, cannot be challenging and fascinating, then make it realistic and factual.

In other words, "tell it like it is", but tell it.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

ONTARIO WOMEN'S BUREAU

400 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, TORONTO

965-1537

GUIDELINES RESPECTING JOB ADVERTISING

Recent amendments to the Ontario Human Rights Code have consolidated into the Code the provisions of the Women's Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

This means that the Human Rights Code now prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and marital status in addition to race, creed, colour, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin.

In accordance with the new provisions, the following guidelines will serve to define for advertisers, newspapers and other publications the application of the advertising provisions as they relate to sex and marital status.

The intent of these provisions is to ensure that no barriers exist — either real or implied — to discourage persons of either sex from seeking jobs for which they would be qualified and would be willing to perform.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Code includes advertising prohibitions which state that advertisers shall not place and publications shall not print advertisements limiting a position, either directly or indirectly, to a person on any of the grounds specified above in the Code.

Exceptions

- (a) where sex or marital status is a *bona fide occupational qualification* and the employer has applied to the Commission and has been granted an EXEMPTION for the particular job (i.e. where it has been established that a particular sex or marital status is necessary to the actual performance of the job).
- (b) exclusively religious, philanthropic, educational, fraternal or social organizations not operated for private profit, where race, creed, colour, age, sex, marital status, nationality, ancestry or place of origin is a *bona fide occupational qualification*.

Confirmation of an exemption

Advertisers who have been granted an exemption by the Commission on the grounds of a *bona fide occupational qualification* will be assigned a reference number. In case of enquiry, we suggest that newspapers and other publications record the reference code number. Such exemptions are not automatic, but may be granted upon written requests from employers at the discretion of the Commission. In order to clarify to the public that an exemption has been granted, it would be in the interest of both the publisher and advertiser to include in any advertisement for an exempted job the phrase "Human Rts. Comm. approv'd". If desired, the exemption reference number may be included.

- (c) domestics in a single family residence are automatically exempt.

The exemption previously operative under the Women's Equal Employment Opportunity Act to those employers of less than 6 employees is NO LONGER IN EFFECT.

Out-of-Province Advertisers: Advertisements placed by advertisers from outside the Province of Ontario are subject to the provisions of this legislation.

Publishers Share Responsibility With Advertisers for Any Breach of These Provisions

HELP WANTED CLASSIFICATIONS

The intent of the legislation is that a neutral, integrated column shall be used, or any alternative system which meets the intent of the legislation. Classifications and/or column heading which denote or may denote a preference (e.g. "Jobs of Interest to . . .") for one sex only are prohibited.

Examples of acceptable classifications are as follows:

- (a) Occupational Groupings: e.g. Automotive, Clerical, Domestic, Factory, Hospital, Hotel, Legal, Office, Professional, Restaurant, Sales, Skilled, Teachers, Technical, Unskilled, etc.
- (b) Alphabetical Listing by Job Title: e.g. Account to X-Ray Technician. Suggested column headings:

Help Wanted
Job Vacancies

Job Availabilities
Employment Opportunities

Employment Agency Listings

Job listings by employment agencies and/or management consultants are bound by the same policy as applies to Help Wanted Columns (i.e. must not be separated according to sex).

INDIVIDUAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Content

Individual advertisements must not imply any restriction or preference on the basis of sex or marital status or any of the other grounds specified in the code. This includes any descriptive wording (e.g. "housewives"), symbol, or representation (e.g. illustration) of a particular sex.

Exceptions to the above policy apply only where an exemption has been granted on the grounds of sex or marital status.

Use of a personal pronoun indicating gender (e.g. he, she) in the wording of advertisements is NOT acceptable. Alternate wording such as the candidate, the person, the applicant, etc., is recommended.

Job Titles

In general, job titles will comply with the Code if they are NEUTRAL with regard to sex and marital status. The TEST of a NEUTRAL JOB TITLE is that it WOULD NOT DISCOURAGE QUALIFIED MALE OR FEMALE APPLICANTS.

The title should clearly DESCRIBE THE JOB – NOT THE GENDER OF THE PERSON DOING THE JOB. Wherever possible, job titles ending with the suffix "man" or "woman" should be replaced with neutral descriptions such as:

person	agent	operator
worker	representative	attendant
helper	assistant	technician

Where there is doubt as to the neutrality of a job title and/or it is not possible to determine a suitable alternative, the use of any of the following techniques will indicate that no sex preference is intended:

- (a) double title which includes both genders: e.g. waiter/waitress, foreman/woman, barmaid/man,
- (b) adding the words "male or female", or "men or women" following the job title; e.g. draftsman – male or female.

Reference Guide for Job Titles

A list of suggested neutral job titles has been prepared which may serve as a useful guide for newspapers and other publications. Copies of this reference guide are available, on request, from the Human Rights Commission, Women's Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Labour, 400 University Ave., Toronto M7A 1T9. Phone 965-1537



Ministry of
Labour

Ontario

Hon. Fern Guindon
Minister

Robert D. Johnston
Deputy Minister

This bulletin was prepared in the:

Municipal Administration Branch
Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs
56 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Y7 Tel. 416-965-3514

Previous bulletins issued in this series:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Highlights of The Municipal Elections Act, 1977 | 14 The Head of Council |
| 2 Conflict of Interest in Municipal Government | 15 An Act to Amend The Municipal Act (Bill 80) Remuneration and Expenses |
| 3 Amendments to The Municipal Elections Act, 1977 | 16 Municipal Staff Reports |
| 4 Council Agenda and Minutes -- Committee Agenda and Reports | 17 Council Committees |
| 5 An Alphabetical Filing System Suitable for a Small Municipality | 18 Liability Protection |
| 6 Bargaining Information | 19 Summary of 1978 Legislation Respecting Remuneration and Expenses |
| 7 Drafting Municipal By-laws | 20 Microrecording |
| 8 Municipal Insurance | 21 Holidays and Time Calculations |
| 9 The Municipality and the Law | 22 Minicomputers |
| 10 Labour Relations -- The Organizing Process | 23 Training Opportunities For Staff in Small Municipalities |
| 11 Procedure By-law | 24 Animal Control |
| 12 Dismissal | 25 Purchasing in Small Municipalities |
| 13 Labour Relations -- Components of a Collective Agreement | 26 Recruiting - I. Planning the Process |
| | 27 Recruiting - II. The Right Person for the Job |

Copies of all the bulletins in this series are available at \$0.50 each, prepaid, from:

Publications Centre
880 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N8

(Please make cheques payable to the Treasurer of Ontario.)

A series of Financial Procedures Bulletins is being issued by the Municipal Budgets and Accounts Branch. Copies are available at \$1.00 each from the Publications Centre. Titles now available are:

- F.1 Cash Management in Municipalities
- F.2 Bank Reconciliation Procedures for Municipalities
- F.3 Municipal Investments
- F.4 Zero-Base Budgeting

Prices subject to change without notice.

